

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES \$2 MILLION TO HELP SMALL FREIGHT RAILROADS
Grants To Be Used For Track And Bridge Maintenance And Upgrades

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley announced today that more than \$2 million has been awarded to 11 small freight railroads in North Carolina through the Short Line Infrastructure Assistance Program. The grants, distributed through the state Department of Transportation, will be used to help with track and bridge maintenance and other improvements.

“We need to continue to modernize the state’s railroads to handle increased shipping, provide a reliable rail network and assure safety,” said Easley. “These kinds of public-private partnerships keep all areas of our state open to increased economic development and diverse industry growth as well as position North Carolina to succeed in the global economy.”

The money will be used to assist 11 railroads across North Carolina that directly benefit 23 counties and 81 companies with more than 6,460 employees.

The Short Line Infrastructure Assistance Program’s focus is to help smaller railroads maintain and improve their tracks and better serve industries in primarily rural areas. The short lines transport goods and materials between local industries and major freight railroads, relieving some of the heavy truck traffic from the state’s major highways, reducing wear and tear on the roadways and improving the efficiency of the overall transportation system.

Improvements to the short lines also help communities retain and attract industries and improve economic competitiveness in these areas. Twenty-one short lines currently operate about 930 miles or 29 percent of freight railroads in North Carolina.

The freight rail projects were ranked based on public and project benefits. Individual grants range from \$35,269 awarded to the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad, a tourist railroad between Dillsboro and Nantahala, to \$601,300 awarded to the Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway, a freight railroad serving Charlotte to Sanford and Aberdeen to Star.

Attached is a complete list of the grants.